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BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES,
FEBRUARY 7, 1868.
Read and 500 copies ordered to be printed.
By order,
MILTON Y. KIDD,
Chief Clerk.

REPORT

OF THE

SPECIAL COMMITTEE

APPOINTED TO VISIT THE

Maryland Hospital.

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REPORT.

House of Delegates,
Annapolis, February 6th, 1868.

To the Honorable Speaker
And Members of the House of Delegates:

Gentlemen: The committee appointed by the House of Delegates to visit the Maryland Hospital, in the City of Baltimore, respectfully submit the following Report as the result of their labor:

Having arrived in the city, your committee were met by a delegation from the Board of Visitors, and conducted to the Institution, where they were welcomed by Doctors Fonerden, Collins and Taneyhill, and Messrs. Thomas Wilson, Johns Hopkins, Enoch Pratt and Thomas M. Smith, Esqs., distinguished gentlemen selected from the list of Managers.

After mutual expressions of gratification at the duty about to be discharged, we were informed that the entire building was thrown open with pleasure to our inspection, and that the Books of the Institution were at our command for the most minute examination. This latter invitation was respectfully declined, and your committee informed those worthy gentlemen that our visit was of a friendly nature, and had not been prompted by any unkind spirit of criticism, but had arisen from the desire to learn the condition of the Institution, to witness the exemplary manner in which the patients were professionally treated, and learn whether the helping hand of Maryland was needed to promote the success of their silent and philanthropic labors.

Placing ourselves under the guidance of these faithful patrons of the Institution, we left the luxurious reception room and proceeded through the various wards, and at almost every step we were forced to pause and admire the order, neatness, purity and system that filled us with astonishment and elicited our warmest admiration.

The Maryland Hospital is a bright, cheerful, though venerable Institution, of vast proportions and chaste design, crowning the summit of one of our loftiest hills, and overlooking the broad waters that surround the City of Baltimore. Simple in its architectural structure, yet spread over an area of more than 300 feet in length, with symetrical proportions, the Hospital lifts its modest towers aloft, high o'er the encircling tenements of man, that gradually have crept around its former lonely confines.

From the centre of the main building, which contains the residence, office parlors and studio of the resident physicians, start spacious corridors extending east and west along its whole extent. On each side of these vast avenues are rows of rooms beautifully furnished, and from their neatness, chaste decorations, reminding you of the series of chambers in a well-regulated hotel. Interspersed among these, ever and anon, parlors of larger proportions meet the astonished gaze, in one of which, to our surprise, we discovered seated at the piano a female form, whose gentle hand swept o'er the responsive keys, eliciting the sweetest strains to soothe her wandering intellect. We paused, and drank in the notes of sweetest strains, such as from the master's hand are rapturously drawn. In the little circle of her mute companions sat the fair form of woman, awakening melodies to cheer the gloomy minds of friends like her afflicted. Pleased at the interest that we manifested in her performance, and conscious of our compliments, she added sweeter and sweeter strains, till at last, as if memory was busy with the past, she warbled forth with deepest pathos one of the choicest melodies.

Your committee indulge in no extravagant eulogy when we say, that throughout the entire building there is scarcely aught to remind you that you walk midst minds dethroned, or gaze on creatures of unsettled intellect. As if to hasten the dawn of returning reason, every room is hung with paintings, and, along the lengthened avenues, engravings of some pleasing scenes adorn the walls to fix the attention, in the lucid intervals, and tempt the erring mind back to her deserted throne. True, as you walk along, some melancholly visages stare vacantly, as if they wondered why you broke the surrounding stillness, but in another moment they seem to look so intelligently, and with so intense a curiosity on those who enter their little circle, that you almost doubt their sad insanity. Such was the general condition of all the inmates, with the exception of some four or five, whose arms were gently pinioned, and even these, were it not for the peculiar garments that encircled their limbs, you would suppose were resting voluntarily with folded arms. All the revolting scenes of forced subjection, of dreary confinement in the solitary cell, of cruel binding to the wretched couch,

all wild and startling shrieks that one expects to meet as the terrible accompaniments of the insane abode, were wanting in this charitable asylum. Indeed, from the mild aspect of the major portion of the inmates, from the neat and tidy chambers, from the calm stillness that dwelt within the walls, from the parlors luxuriously adorned, we lost sight of all the anticipated scenes of woe, of wildest discord, and of startling cry, and fancied that we trod the decorated galleries of some favored child of wealth.

In the male department, equal astonishment met your committee at every step. The same order, the same comfort, the same freedom from restraint, and the same kind treatment were everywhere visible. One solitary instance of apparent restraint presented itself, in the person of an athletic young man, who, with arms confined, and fettered feet, followed us from room to room, earnestly requesting our interposition for release. It was amusing to us, who had learned from the physicians his strong propensity to use without consideration or much courtesy to companions his lower limbs, to observe the subtle cunning with which he reasoned with his keeper to tempt him by the most urgent solicitations and feigned surprise at his condition to release him from the mild restraint; nor could we suppress the smile at the resigned and vanquished appearance with which he acknowledged his ineffectual attempt to deceive his kind and intelligent guardians.

Turning from this strange character in the sad drama of life, we passed from alcove to alcove, until we were ushered into a spacious apartment furnished with a beautiful table, (the gift of one of the generous patrons of the Institution,) at which two graceful and accomplished gentlemen were amusing themselves at a game of billiards. You would have supposed that it was a contest for superiority between two gentlemen of wealth, who were endowed with all the accomplishments of polished life. And yet they were lunatics! How little would one have suspected that they were the confined inmates of an insane asylum, when he beheld the prompt suspension of the game, the graceful recognition of our presence, the polite salutation, even the surrender of the cues, with a courteous invitation to engage in the recreation, the calm placidity with which they mildly looked upon the attempts of their experienced performers, and the modest reception of the compliment upon their skillful exhibition of a knowledge of the game!

Passing from the contemplation of these wealthier inmates, the attention of your committee was next directed to the unfortunate patients from the various counties of the State, who were the recipients of their benevolent charity and protec-

tion. In the apartments set aside for this class of patients, the same scrupulous care for their comfort was visible, the same neatness of attire, and the same freedom from severity of treatment were equally apparent. Engaged in promenading along the corridors, or seated in their comfortable recesses, (for we cannot call them cells,) were to be seen the afflicted poor of our rural districts. Everything that was calculated to arouse the angry feelings of the patient, or fret his spirit by the exhibition of the implements of forcible restraint, was studiously and judiciously awarded. The ordinary bars that guard the windows of the prison-house were concealed by the net-work of wire, that shielded the apertures through which the bright beams of sunlight sparkled to banish the dreary gloom of the cell; no heavily bossed, cumbrous, or chained door, on grating hinges turning, shut in from human gaze the idiotic occupant.

Moving midst scenes like these, your committee could not withhold their admiration at the progress of science, the triumph of the profession, and the salutary benefits springing from the humane and milder system of modern times, which has banished the scourge, the chain, the cord, and all the cruel implements that formerly constituted remedial agents for the management of the disordered intellect. Within the walls of this cherished institution we beheld the silent and salutary workings of philanthropy. With physicians skilled in their profession and devoted to their charitable labors; with words of encouragement met by grateful recognition; with female attendants, whose countenances indicated kindness and intelligence, standing around, rather as companions and friends than the dreaded wardens of the room; with patients led by kind ministration to yield a ready assent, we felt indeed, that in the science of medicine, a new era had arrived, and that brighter hopes might awaken in the hearts of the afflicted.

Your committee were also favorably impressed with the excellent order, judgment, economy, aptitude and general facilities, which in all the minor departments, as refectory, &c., were manifestly visible, giving the strongest evidence of the care and interest manifested in the institution by its generous and efficient curators.

Your committee were peculiarly pleased with the admirable manner in which the temperature was uniformly maintained through all the wards and avenues of the spacious edifice. We looked around and found no blazing hearth or cumbrous furnace sending forth its heat, yet in each chamber and each lengthened avenue, the balmy atmosphere of summer seemed to float. The secret was unfolded. Beyond the walls, and in close proximity to the building, arose a modest

structure containing a most beautiful furnace of immense capacity, and generating the balmy heat that cheered the deep recesses of the vast and stately mansion.

Turning from this splendid specimen of mechanical genius, our attention was directed to the vast garden spread out before us, and which, under the direction of a Superintendent, aided by some of the more improved patients, had furnished a supply to the Institution that would have cost some seven hundred dollars.

The last object of attraction that ministered to our gratification was the beautiful collection of housed flowers, in which were commingled the fair japonica, the rose of various and beauteous hues, and other blossoms of varying tint, and rich in odorous perfume. In this bright field of flowers your committee closed their labors, and completed the pleasant task assigned.

Re-entering the magnificent building, your committee were escorted to a sumptuous banquet, and partook of the hospitalities generously tendered by those accomplished and worthy patrons of this time-honored Institution. Having recorded our names as the delegated visitors from the Maryland Legislature, beside those of the energetic and faithful curators of the Hospital, we parted with the best wishes for the enterprise, and felt, as we left that circle of friends, that the poor, afflicted and benighted beings entrusted to their care, were blessed indeed with kind benefactors; and as we turned from the threshhold of the edifice, we gazed with pride upon its towering spires as one of the proudest monuments of our State.

EDWARD J. CHAISTY, M. D.,
THOS. W. HAMMOND, M. D.,
CHAS. H. ROSE, M. D.,
Committee.